

**Friendship Heights
Transportation Management District
Advisory Committee
October 14, 2014**

Voting Members

Barbara Condos (Vice Chair)
Campbell Graeb
Christopher Itteilag
John Mertens

Town of Somerset
Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
Somerset House Management Association
Friendship Heights Village

Non-voting Members

Sandra L. Brecher
Chief John Fitzgerald

MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
Chevy Chase Village Police

TMD Staff

Jim Carlson
Nakengi Byrd

MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

Absent

James Calderwood
Joe Dixon
Matthew Folden
Tiffany Gee (Chair)
Kenneth Hartman
Cobey R. Kuff
Rachael Schacherer

Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers
GEICO
M-NCPPC
Chevy Chase Land Company
B-CC Services Center
WP Project Developer, LLC
Friendship Heights Village

Guests

Tim Balinskas
Moiria Bindner
Miti Figueredo
Bob Joiner
Julian Mansfield
Jeffrey Slavin

Sharp & Co.
Sharp & Co.
Chevy Chase Land Company
The Agenda News
Village of Friendship Heights
Mayor – Town of Somerset

Abbreviations:

CCLC = Chevy Chase Land Company
SHA = State Highway Administration

Item 1, 2 & 3 – Introductions/Chair Comments: Acting Chair Barbra Condos called the meeting to order. Members and guests introduced themselves.

Meeting minutes vote was tabled – no quorum.

Jim Carlson reported that on October 20th from 7-9 pm at the Friendship Heights Village Center there will be a joint meeting with District officials and Montgomery County planners to discuss joint transportation issues.

He also noted – in connection with the Committee’s on-going discussion regarding the installation of meters on Wisconsin Avenue – the daily average daily traffic counts conducted by the State Highway Administration (SHA) for selected areas of Route 355. The average daily vehicle count in Bethesda for Wisconsin Avenue (Route 355) below Old Georgetown Road is 40,700 and 37,331 below Bradley Boulevard (handout). **Mr. Carlson** said the parking meters in the Bethesda area have not caused significant traffic flow issues, while the traffic volume is comparable to the volume in Friendship Heights. He asked that the Committee keep this in mind during the presentation by **Miti Figueredo**.

Item 4 – Wisconsin Avenue Parking Meters: **Ms. Condos** welcomed **Ms. Figueredo**, Vice President of Public Affairs for Chevy Chase Land Company (CCLC). **Ms. Figueredo’s** main focus is the Chevy Chase Lake East development, and her purpose is to design vibrant, inviting urban places with thriving retail.

She explained CCLC’s position in favor of off-peak, on-street parking on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue in front of The Collection, the Land Company’s retail shopping center. She said that she is aware of the parking issues on the west side of Wisconsin Avenue due to the two medical buildings – meters are not considered viable due to the number of drop-off zones and driveways. However, as owners of the east side retail from Wisconsin Circle to Sachs Fifth Avenue at Somerset Terrace, CCLC believes that on-street parking will help address security issues (such as smash and grabs) that have occurred in the area. On-street parking will create a buffer zone, making the high end retail stores less accessible to would-be thieves. Retailers in the area also agree that parking will increase foot traffic.

There was also concern that six lanes of traffic on this stretch of Wisconsin Avenue contributes to an unsafe environment for pedestrians. Due to these conditions, a “road diet” was proposed, which means taking away a travel lane for various reasons (this case parking) in order to do the following:

- Decrease traffic speed
- Reduce lanes for pedestrian crossing
- Increase retail foot traffic
- Create a safety buffer for pedestrians

Ms. Figueredo commented that there is an oversupply of parking at Giant Food because the lot was built at a time when developers did not understand that less parking was needed in transit accessible urban areas. Other areas of discussion:

- The decision to install parking meters can be easily reversed if there is excessive traffic backup or side street diversion
- The importance of slowing traffic in urban areas – the lower the speed of vehicle striking a pedestrian, the lower chance of severe injury or fatality
- Fewer lanes produce slower traffic; pedestrians feel safer with parked cars providing a barrier
- Speed vs. Flow: Slower traffic speed will not worsen traffic congestion because vehicles traveling at lower speeds are not delayed any more than normal; light timing remains the same
- Federal Highway Association advocates road diets in urban areas where pedestrian safety is prioritized

Points of the Q& A that followed were:

- Foot traffic from pedestrians trampling the surrounding foliage and shrubbery – CCLC is able to rearrange and maintain landscaping for upkeep
- Revenue from meters will fund parking enforcement
 - The Committee discussed in depth the impact of parking possibly causing gridlock on Wisconsin Avenue even during off-peak hours

- SHA and the Bethesda Chevy Chase Chamber also supports parking meters
- **Ms. Figueredo** announced that she will be a speaker at the Walkable Friendship Heights event on Saturday, October 18th from 10am-12pm –register for the event online at the Coalition for Smarter Growth website

Ms. Condos announced:

- Thank you to all Walk and Ride Challenge participants – there was a 10 percent increase in participation over last year
- Car Free Day was a success
- Early voting is on the way
- Watch for kids this Halloween

Around the Room: John Mertens expressed concern regarding honking horns becoming a noise nuisance. Excessive honking is in violation of laws as they are only to be used in cases of emergencies; however, enforcement is difficult.

Chief John Fitzgerald reported that DC Police issued a notice on its listserve of daytime house break-ins, with some occurring in District 2 of lower Montgomery County. The burglary increase is seasonal due to the time change around the holidays and pedestrian activity around Metro stations. He gave pointers for protection:

- Walk with purpose remaining alert of our surroundings
- If listening to music, use only one ear bud
- Walk in groups when possible
- Refrain from holding expensive cell phones with your head down

Around the Room: Mr. Campbell raised concerns regarding the depilated condition of the pavement, traffic lights and congestion along Western Avenue between River Road and Wisconsin Circle. There has been utility road work not repaired causing traffic congestion. **Mr. Carlson** said he would follow up the new District Dept. of Transportation contact since **Kelly Peterson** is no longer with the agency.

Adjourned

Next Meeting : November 18, 2014